

II Kings

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-THE JPS TANAKH: Gender-Sensitive Edition

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II Kings

Chapter 1

After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel.

Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber at Samaria and was injured. So he sent messengers, whom he instructed: "Go inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury."

But an angel of GOD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go and confront the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, 'Is there no God in Israel that you go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Assuredly, thus said GOD: You shall not rise from the bed you are lying on,^a *rise from the bed you are lying on* Lit. "descend from the bed you have mounted." but you shall die.'" And Elijah went. The messengers returned to Ahaziah;^b *Ahaziah* Heb. "him." and he asked, "Why have you come back?"

They answered him, "A man came toward us and said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him: Thus said the ETERNAL: Is there no God in Israel that you must send to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Assuredly, you shall not rise from the bed you are lying on, but shall die.'"

"What sort of man was it," he asked them, "who came toward you and said these things to you?"

"A hairy man," they replied, "with a leather belt tied around his waist." "That's Elijah the Tishbite!" he said.

Then he sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. He climbed up to him, and found him sitting at the top of a hill. "Agent of God," he said to him, "by order of the king, come down!"

Elijah replied to the captain of the fifty, "If I am an agent of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you with your fifty men!" And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

The king then sent to him another captain with his fifty men; and he addressed him^c *addressed him* Emendation yields "went up and said to him," cf. v. 9. as follows: "Agent of God, by order of the king, come down at once!"

But Elijah answered him, "If I am an agent of God,^d *agent of God* Heb. *'iyš 'elohiym* let fire come down from heaven and consume you with your fifty men!" And fire of God^e *fire of God* Heb. *'eš 'elohiym* came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

Then he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. The third captain of fifty climbed to the top, knelt before Elijah, and implored him, saying, "Oh, agent of God, please have regard for my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours!"

Already fire has come from heaven and consumed the first two captains of fifty and their men;^f

men Lit. "fifties." I beg you, have regard for my life!"

Then the angel of OD said to Elijah, "Go down with him, do not be afraid of him." So he rose and went down with him to the king. He said to him, "Thus said OD: Because you sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron—as if there were no God in Israel whose word you could seek—assuredly, you shall not rise from the bed that you are lying on; but you shall die."

And [Ahaziah] died, according to the word of OD that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram^g succeeded him as king, in the second year of King Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat of Judah, for he had no son.

The other events of Ahaziah's reign [and] his actions are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Chapter 2

When OD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha had set out from Gilgal.

Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for OD has sent me on to Bethel." "As OD lives and as you live," said Elisha, "I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

Disciples of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that OD will take your master away from you^a*away from you* Lit. "from upon your head." today?" He replied, "I know it, too; be silent."

Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, for OD has sent me on to Jericho." "As OD lives and as you live," said Elisha, "I will not leave you." So they went on to Jericho.

The disciples of the prophets who were at Jericho came over to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that OD will take your master away from you^b*away from you* See note at v. 3. today?" He replied, "I know it, too; be silent."

Elijah said to him, "Stay here, for OD has sent me on to the Jordan." "As OD lives and as you live, I will not leave you," he said, and the two of them went on.

Fifty of the disciples of the prophets followed and stood by at a distance as the two of them stopped at the Jordan.

Thereupon Elijah took his mantle and, rolling it up, he struck the water; it divided to the right and left, so that the two of them crossed over on dry land.

As they were crossing, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha answered, "Let a double portion^c*double portion* Lit. "two-thirds"; cf. Zech. 13.8. of your spirit pass on to me."

"You have asked a difficult thing," he said. "If you see me as I am being taken from you, this will be granted to you; if not, it will not."

As they kept on walking and talking, a fiery chariot with fiery horses suddenly appeared and separated one from the other; and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "Oh, father, father! Israel's chariots and riders!" When he could no longer see him, he grasped his garments and rent them in two.

He picked up Elijah's mantle, which had dropped from him; and he went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

Taking the mantle that had dropped from Elijah, he struck the water and said, "Where is the ETERNAL, the God of Elijah?" As he too struck the water, it parted to the right and to the left, and Elisha crossed over.

When the disciples of the prophets at Jericho saw him from a distance, they exclaimed, "The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha!" And they went to meet him and bowed low before him to the ground.

They said to him, "Your servants have fifty able men with them. Let them go and look for your master; perhaps the spirit of GOD has carried him off and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." "Do not send them," he replied.

But they kept pressing him for a long time, until he said, "Send them." So they sent out fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him.

They came back to him while he was still in Jericho; and he said to them, "I told you not to go."

The leaders^{class="footnote-marker">d}<i class="footnote">leaders Or "inhabitants."</i> of the town said to Elisha, "Look, the town is a pleasant place to live in, as my lord can see; but the water is bad and the land causes bereavement."</sup>

He responded, "Bring me a new dish and put salt in it." They brought it to him;

he went to the spring and threw salt into it. And he said, "Thus said GOD: I heal this water; no longer shall death and bereavement come from it!"

The water has remained wholesome to this day, in accordance with the word spoken by Elisha.

From there he went up to Bethel. As he was going up the road, some little boys came out of the town and jeered at him, saying, "Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!"

He turned around and looked at them and cursed them in the name of GOD. Thereupon, two she-bears came out of the woods and mangled forty-two of the children.

He went on from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Chapter 3

Jehoram son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of King Jehoshaphat of Judah; and he reigned twelve years. He did what was displeasing to GOD, yet not like his father and mother, for he removed the pillars of Baal that his father had made.

However, he clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat caused Israel to commit; he did not depart from them.

Now King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder; and he used to pay as tribute to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams.^a<i

class="footnote">a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams Or "the wool of 100,000 lambs and of 100,000 rams."</i>

But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. So King Jehoram promptly set out from Samaria and mustered all Israel.

At the same time, he sent this message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you come with me to make war on Moab?" He replied, "I will go. I will do what you do: my troops shall be your troops, my horses shall be your horses."

And he asked, "Which route shall we take?" [Jehoram] replied, "The road through the wilderness of Edom."

So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom set out, and they marched for seven days until they rounded [the tip of the Dead

Sea]; and there was no water left for the army or for the animals that were with them.

"Alas!" cried the king of Israel. "GOD has brought these three kings together only to deliver them into the hands of Moab." But Jehoshaphat said, "Isn't there a prophet of GOD here, through whom we may inquire of GOD?" One of the courtiers of the king of Israel spoke up and said, "Elisha son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of ^{class="footnote-marker">b} *class="footnote">b* poured water on the hands of **I.e., personally attended. *</i>* Elijah, is here."</sup>

"The word of GOD is with him," said Jehoshaphat. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have you to do with me? Go to your father's prophets or your mother's prophets." But the king of Israel said, "Don't [say that], for GOD has brought these three kings together only to deliver them into the hands of Moab."

"As GOD of Hosts lives, whom I serve," Elisha answered, "were it not that I respect King Jehoshaphat of Judah, I wouldn't look at you or notice you."

Now then, get me a musician." *
*As the musician played,

GOD's hand came upon him,

and he said, "Thus said GOD: This wadi shall be full of pools."

For thus said GOD: You shall see no wind, you shall see no rain, and yet the wadi shall be filled with water; and you and your cattle and your pack animals shall drink.

And this is but a slight thing in GOD's sight, for Moab will also be delivered into your hands.

You shall conquer every fortified town and every splendid city; you shall fell every good tree and stop up all wells of water; and every fertile field you shall ruin with stones."

And in the morning, when it was time to present the grain offering, water suddenly came from the direction of Edom and the land was covered by the water.

Meanwhile, all the Moabites had heard that the kings were advancing to make war on them; every man old enough to bear arms ^{class="footnote-marker">c} *class="footnote">b* every man old enough to bear arms ** Lit. "from all those old enough to gird on a sword." *</i>* rallied, and they stationed themselves at the border.</sup>

Next morning, when they rose, the sun was shining over the water, and from the distance the water appeared to the Moabites as red as blood.

"That's blood!" they said. "The kings must have fought among themselves and killed each other. Now to the spoil, Moab!"

They entered the Israelite camp, and the Israelites arose and attacked the Moabites, who fled before them. They advanced, constantly attacking ^{class="footnote-marker">d} *class="footnote">b* They advanced, constantly attacking ** Meaning of Heb. uncertain. *</i>* the Moabites,</sup>

and they destroyed the towns. They each threw a stone into every fertile field, so that it was covered over; and they stopped up every spring and felled every fruit tree. Only the walls of ^{class="footnote-marker">e} *class="footnote">b* Only the walls of ** Lit. "Until the stones in"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. *</i>* Kir-hareseth were left, and then the slingers surrounded it and attacked it.</sup>

Seeing that the battle was going against him, the king of Moab led an attempt of seven hundred swordsmen to break a way through to the king of Edom; ^{class="footnote-marker">f} *class="footnote">b* Edom ** Emendation yields "Aram." *</i>* but they failed.</sup>

So he took his first-born son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him up on the wall as a burnt offering. A great wrath came upon Israel, so they withdrew from him and went back to [their own] land.

Chapter 4

A certain woman, the wife of one of the disciples of the prophets, cried out to Elisha: "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know how your servant revered GOD. And now a creditor is coming to seize my two children as slaves."

Elisha said to her, "What can I do for you? Tell me, what have you in the house?" She replied, "Your maidservant has nothing at all in the house, except a jug of oil."

"Go," he said, "and borrow vessels outside, from all your neighbors, empty vessels, as many as you can."

Then go in and shut the door behind you and your children, and pour [oil] into all those vessels, removing each one as it is filled."

She went away and shut the door behind her and her children. They kept bringing [vessels] to her and she kept pouring.

When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." He answered her, "There are no more vessels"; and the oil stopped.

She came and told the agent of God, and he said, "Go sell the oil and pay your debt, and you and your children can live on the rest."

One day Elisha visited Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she urged him to have a meal; and whenever he passed by, he would stop there for a meal.

Once she said to her husband, "I am sure it is a holy agent of God who comes this way regularly."

Let us make a small enclosed upper chamber^a*^a<i class="footnote">enclosed upper chamber Or "upper wall-chamber"; lit. "an upper chamber of wall(s)."</i> and place a bed, a table, a chair, and a lampstand there for him, so that he can stop there whenever he comes to us."*

One day he came there; he retired to the upper chamber and lay down there.

He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call that Shunammite." He called her, and she stood before him.

He said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us."

What can we do for you? Can we speak in your behalf to the king or to the army commander?'" She replied, "I live among my own people."

"What then can be done for her?" he asked. "The fact is," said Gehazi, "she has no son, and her husband is old."

"Call her," he said. He called her, and she stood in the doorway.

And Elisha said, "At this season next year, you will be embracing a son." She replied, "Please, my lord, agent of God, do not delude your maidservant."

The woman conceived and bore a son at the same season the following year, as Elisha had assured her.

The child grew up. One day, he went out to his father among the reapers. [Suddenly] he cried to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" He said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother."

He picked him up and brought him to his mother. And the child sat on her lap until noon; and he died.

She took him up and laid him on the bed of the agent of God, and left him and closed the door.

Then she called to her husband: "Please, send me one of the servants and one of the jennies, so I can hurry to the agent of God and back."

But he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." She answered, "It's all right."

marker">b</sup><i class="footnote">It's all right Heb.
<i>shalom</i>.</i>

She had the jenny saddled, and said to her servant, "Urge it on;^c<i class="footnote">Urge it on The servant runs behind the donkey and urges it on with a stick.</i> see that I don't slow down unless I tell you."

She went on until she came to the agent of God on Mount Carmel. When the agent of God saw her from afar, he said to his servant Gehazi, "There is that Shunammite.

Go, hurry toward her and ask her, 'How are you? How is your husband? How is the child?'" "We are well," she replied.

But when she came up to the agent of God on the mountain, she clasped his feet. Gehazi stepped forward to push her away; but the agent of God said, "Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; and G<small>OD</small> has hidden it from me and has not told me."

Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn't I say: 'Don't mislead me'?"

He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your skirts,^d<i class="footnote">Tie up your skirts Lit. "Gird your loins"; cf. 1 Kings 18.46.</i> take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him. And place my staff on the face of the boy."

But the boy's mother said, "As G<small>OD</small> lives and as you live, I will not leave you!" So he arose and followed her.

Gehazi had gone on before them and had placed the staff on the boy's face; but there was no sound or response. He turned back to meet him and told him, "The boy has not awakened."

Elisha came into the house, and there was the boy, laid out dead on his couch.

He went in, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to G<small>OD</small>.

Then he mounted [the bed] and placed himself over the child. He put his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, and his hands on its hands, as he bent over it. And the body of the child became warm.

He stepped down, walked once up and down the room, then mounted and bent over him. Thereupon, the boy sneezed seven times, and the boy opened his eyes.

[Elisha] called Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite," and he called her. When she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son."

She came and fell at his feet and bowed low to the ground; then she picked up her son and left.

Elisha returned to Gilgal. There was a famine in the land, and the disciples of the prophets were sitting before him. He said to his servant, "Set the large pot [on the fire] and cook a stew for the disciples of the prophets."

So one of them went out into the fields to gather sprouts. He came across a wild vine and picked from it wild gourds, as many as his garment would hold. Then he came back and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know [what they were];

and they served it for those present to eat. While they were still eating of the stew, they began to cry out: "O agent of God, there is death in the pot!"^e<i class="footnote">death in the pot The wild gourds cause severe cramps.</i> And they could not eat it.

"Fetch some flour," [Elisha] said. He threw it into the pot and said, "Serve it to the people and let them eat." And there was no longer anything harmful in the pot.

A man came from Baal-shalishah and he brought the agent of God some bread of the first reaping—twenty loaves of barley bread, and some fresh grain in his sack.^f<i class="footnote">in

his sack Or "on the stalk"; perhaps connected with Ugaritic
<i>ḥṣl</i>.</i> And [Elisha] said, "Give it to the people and let them eat."

His attendant replied, "How can I set this before a hundred people?" But he said, "Give it to the people and let them eat. For thus said G<small>OD</small>: They shall eat and have some left over."

So he set it before them; and when they had eaten, they had some left over, as G<small>OD</small> had said.

Chapter 5

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was an important man to his lord and high in his favor, for through him G<small>OD</small> had granted victory to Aram. But the man, though a great warrior, was a leper.^a<i class="footnote">leper Cf. note at Lev. 13.3.</i>

Once, when the Arameans were out raiding, they carried off a young girl from the land of Israel, and she became an attendant to Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "I wish Master could come before the prophet in Samaria; he would cure him of his leprosy."

[Naaman] went and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said.

And the king of Aram said, "Go to the king of Israel, and I will send along a letter."
He set out, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.

He brought the letter to the king of Israel. It read: "Now, when this letter reaches you, know that I have sent my courtier Naaman to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

When the king of Israel read the letter, he rent his clothes and cried, "Am I God, to deal death or give life, that this fellow writes to me to cure a man of leprosy? Just see for yourselves that he is seeking a pretext against me!"

When Elisha, the agent of God, heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent a message to the king: "Why have you rent your clothes? Let him come to me, and he will learn that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and halted at the door of Elisha's house.

Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be pure."

But Naaman was angered and walked away. "I thought," he said, "he would surely come out to me, and would stand and invoke the E<small>TERNAL</small> his God by name, and would wave his hand toward the spot, and cure the affected part."

Are not the Amanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? I could bathe in them and be pure!" And he stalked off in a rage.

But his servants came forward and spoke to him. "Sir,"^b<i class="footnote">Sir Lit. "[My] father."</i> they said, "if the prophet told you to do something difficult, would you not do it? How much more when he has only said to you, 'Bathe and be pure.'"

So he went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times, as the agent of God had bidden; and his flesh became like a little child's, and he was pure.

Returning with his entire retinue to the agent of God, he stood before him and exclaimed, "Now I know that there is no God in the whole world except in Israel! So please accept a gift from your servant."

But he replied, "As G<small>OD</small> lives, whom I serve, I will not accept anything." He pressed him to accept, but he refused.

And Naaman said, "Then at least let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will never again offer up burnt offering or sacrifice to any god, except GOD."

But may GOD pardon your servant for this: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow low in worship there, and he is leaning on my arm so that I must bow low in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow low in the temple of Rimmon, may GOD pardon your servant in this."

And he said to him, "Go in peace."
When he had gone some distance from him,

Gehazi, the attendant of Elisha the agent of God, thought: "My master has let that Aramean Naaman off without accepting what he brought!^c<i class="footnote">has let that Aramean Naaman off without accepting what he brought Lit. "has prevented that Aramean Naaman from having what he brought accepted."</i> As GOD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he alighted from his chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?" "All is well," he replied. "My master has sent me to say: Two youths, disciples of the prophets, have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing."

Naaman said, "Please take two talents." He urged him, and he wrapped the two talents of silver in two bags and gave them, along with two changes of clothes, to two of his servants, who carried them ahead of him. When [Gehazi] arrived at the citadel, he took [the things] from them and deposited them in the house. Then he dismissed the men and they went their way.

He entered and stood before his master; and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" He replied, "Your servant has not gone anywhere." Then [Elisha] said to him, "Did not my spirit^d<i class="footnote">spirit Lit. "heart."</i> go along when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this a time to take money in order to buy clothing and olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves? Surely, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." And as [Gehazi] left his presence, he was snow-white with leprosy.

Chapter 6

The disciples of the prophets said to Elisha, "See, the place where we live under your direction is too cramped for us.

Let us go to the Jordan, and let us each get a log there and build quarters there for ourselves to live in." "Do so," he replied.

Then one of them said, "Will you please come along with your servants?" "Yes, I will come," he said;

and he accompanied them. So they went to the Jordan and cut timber.

As one of them was felling a trunk, the iron ax head fell into the water. And he cried aloud, "Alas, master, it was a borrowed one!"

"Where did it fall?" asked the agent of God. He showed him the spot; and he cut off a stick and threw it in, and he made the ax head float.

"Pick it up," he said; so he reached out and took it.

While the king of Aram was waging war against Israel, he took counsel with his officers and said, "I will encamp^a<i class="footnote">I will encamp Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> in such and such a place."

But the agent of God sent word to the king of Israel, "Take care not to pass through that place, for the Arameans are encamped there."

So the king of Israel sent word to the place of which the agent of God had told him. Time and again^{class="footnote-marker">b}<i class="footnote">Time and again Lit. "not once or twice."</i> he alerted such a place^{class="footnote-marker">c}<i class="footnote">such a place Heb. "it."</i> and took precautions there.</sup></sup>

Greatly agitated about this matter, the king of Aram summoned his officers and said to them, "Tell me! Who of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

"No one, my lord king," said one of the officers. "Elisha, that prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

"Go find out where he is," he said, "so that I can have him seized." It was reported to him that [Elisha] was in Dothan; so he sent horses and chariots there and a strong force. They arrived at night and encircled the town.

When the attendant of the agent of God rose early and went outside, he saw a force, with horses and chariots, surrounding the town. "Alas, master, what shall we do?" his servant asked him.

"Have no fear," he replied. "There are more on our side than on theirs."

Then Elisha prayed: "ETERNAL One, open his eyes and let him see." And GOD opened the servant's eyes and he saw the hills all around Elisha covered with horses and chariots of fire.

[The Arameans] came down against him, and Elisha prayed to GOD: "Please strike this people with a blinding light." And they were struck with a blinding light, as Elisha had asked.

Elisha said to them, "This is not the road, and that is not the town; follow me, and I will lead you to the man you want." And he led them to Samaria.

When they entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O ETERNAL One, open the eyes of these men so that they may see." GOD opened their eyes and they saw that they were inside Samaria.

When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "Father, shall I strike them down?"

"No, do not," he replied. "Did you take them captive with your sword and bow that you would strike them down? Rather, set food and drink before them, and let them eat and drink and return to their master."

So he prepared a lavish feast for them and, after they had eaten and drunk, he let them go, and they returned to their master. And the Aramean bands stopped invading the land of Israel.

Sometime later, King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army and marched upon Samaria and besieged it.

There was a great famine in Samaria, and the siege continued until a donkey's head sold for eighty [shekels] of silver and a quarter of a <i>kab</i> of doves' dung^{class="footnote-marker">d}<i class="footnote">doves' dung Apparently a popular term for "carob pods," as in Akkadian.</i> for five shekels.</sup>

Once, when the king of Israel was walking on the city wall, a woman cried out to him: "Help me, Your Majesty!"

"Don't [ask me]," he replied. "Let GOD help you! Where could I get help for you, from the threshing floor or from the winepress? But what troubles you?" the king asked her. The woman answered, "That woman said to me, 'Give up your son and we will eat him today; and tomorrow we'll eat my son.'"

So we cooked my son and we ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son and let's eat him'; but she hid her son."

When the king heard what the woman said, he rent his clothes; and as he walked along the wall, the people could see that he was wearing sackcloth underneath.

He said, "Thus and more may God do to me if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders^e*^e<i>his shoulders</i>Lit. "him."</i> today."*

Now Elisha was sitting at home and the elders were sitting with him. The king^f*^f<i>The king</i>Heb. "He."</i> had sent one of his men ahead; but before that messenger arrived, Elisha^g*^g<i>Elisha</i>Heb. "he."</i> said to the elders, "Do you see—that murderer has sent someone to cut off my head! Watch when the messenger comes, and shut the door and hold the door fast against him. No doubt the sound of his master's footsteps will follow."**

While he was still talking to them, the messenger^h*^h<i>messenger</i>Emendation yields "king."</i> came to him and said, "This calamity is from GOD. What more can I hope for from GOD?"*

Chapter 7

And Elisha replied, "Hear the word of GOD. Thus said GOD: This time tomorrow, a *seah* of choice flour shall sell for a shekel at the gate of Samaria, and two *seah*s of barley for a shekel."

The aide on whose arm the king was leaning spoke up and said to the agent of God, "Even if GOD were to make windows in the sky, could this come to pass?" And he retorted, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

There were four men, lepers, outside the gate. They said to one another, "Why should we sit here waiting for death? If we decide to go into the town, what with the famine in the town, we shall die there; and if we just sit here, still we die. Come, let us desert to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we shall live; and if they put us to death, we shall but die."

They set out at twilight for the Aramean camp; but when they came to the edge of the Aramean camp, there was no one there.

For [God] had caused the Aramean camp to hear a sound of chariots, a sound of horses—the din of a huge army. They said to one another, "The king of Israel must have hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Mizraim^a*^a<i>Mizraim</i>Cf. 1 Kings 10.28 and note there.</i> to attack us!"*

And they fled headlong in the twilight, abandoning their tents and horses and donkeys—the [entire] camp just as it was—as they fled for their lives.

When those lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into one of the tents and ate and drank; then they carried off silver and gold and clothing from there and buried it. They came back and went into another tent, and they carried off what was there and buried it.

Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This is a day of good news, and we are keeping silent! If we wait until the light of morning, we shall incur guilt. Come, let us go and inform the king's palace."

They went and called out to the gatekeepers of the city and told them, "We have been to the Aramean camp. There is not a soul there, nor any human sound; but the horses are tethered and the donkeys are tethered and the tents are undisturbed."

The gatekeepers called out, and the news was passed on into the king's palace.

The king rose in the night and said to his courtiers, "I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know that we are starving, so they have gone out of camp and hidden in the fields, thinking: When they come out of the town, we will take them alive and get into the town."

But one of the courtiers spoke up, "Let a few^{^b<i class='footnote'>few Lit. "five."</i> of the remaining horses that are still here be taken—they are like those that are left here of the whole multitude of Israel, out of the whole multitude of Israel that have perished^{^c<i class='footnote'>they are like those ... that have perished Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i>—and let us send and find out."}}

They took two teams^{^d<i class='footnote'>teams Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> of horses and the king sent them after the Aramean army, saying, "Go and find out." They followed them as far as the Jordan, and found the entire road full of clothing and gear that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste; and the messengers returned and told the king.}

The people then went out and plundered the Aramean camp. So a <i>seah</i> of choice flour sold for a shekel, and two <i>seah</i>s of barley for a shekel—as GOD had spoken.

Now the king had put the aide on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate; and he was trampled to death in the gate by the people—just as the agent of God had spoken, as he had spoken when the king came down to him. For when the agent of God said to the king, "This time tomorrow two <i>seah</i>s of barley shall sell at the gate of Samaria for a shekel, and a <i>seah</i> of choice flour for a shekel,"

the aide answered the agent of God and said, "Even if GOD made windows in the sky, could this come to pass?" And he retorted, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

That is exactly what happened to him: The people trampled him to death in the gate.

Chapter 8

Elisha had said to the woman whose son he revived, "Leave immediately with your family and go sojourn somewhere else;^{^a<i class='footnote'>somewhere else Lit. "wherever you may sojourn."</i> for GOD has decreed a seven-year famine upon the land, and it has already begun."}

The woman had done as the agent of God had spoken; she left with her family and sojourned in the land of the Philistines for seven years. At the end of the seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and went to the king to complain about her house and farm. Now the king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the agent of God, and he said, "Tell me all the wonderful things that Elisha has done." While he was telling the king how [Elisha] had revived a dead person, in came the woman whose son he had revived, complaining to the king about her house and farm. "My lord king," said Gehazi, "this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha revived."

The king questioned the woman, and she told him [the story]; so the king assigned a eunuch to her and instructed him: "Restore all her property, and all the revenue from her farm from the time she left the country until now."

Elisha arrived in Damascus at a time when King Ben-hadad of Aram was ill. The king^{^b<i class='footnote'>The king Moved up from v. 8 for clarity.</i> was told, "The agent of God is on his way here,"}

and he said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go meet the agent of God, and through him inquire of GOD: Will I recover from this illness?"

Hazael went to meet him, taking with him as a gift forty camel-loads of all the bounty of Damascus. He came and stood before him and said, "Your

son, King Ben-hadad of Aram, has sent me to you to ask: Will I recover from this illness?"

Elisha said to him, "Go and say to him, 'You will recover.' However, GOD has revealed to me that he will die."

The agent of God kept his face expressionless^c*kept his face expressionless* Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

for a long time; and then he wept. "Why does my lord weep?" asked Hazael. "Because I know," he replied, "what harm you will do to the Israelite people: you will set their fortresses on fire, put their young men to the sword, dash their little ones in pieces, and rip open their pregnant women."

"But how," asked Hazael, "can your servant, who is a mere dog, perform such a mighty deed?" Elisha replied, "GOD has shown me a vision of you as king of Aram."

He left Elisha and returned to his master, who asked him, "What did Elisha say to you?" He replied, "He told me that you would recover."

The next day, [Hazael] took a piece of netting,^d*a piece of netting* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. dipped it in water, and spread it over his face. So [Ben-hadad] died, and Hazael succeeded him as king.

In the fifth year of King Joram^e*Joram* Throughout this chapter, the name Joram is sometimes written Jehoram. son of Ahab of Israel—Jehoshaphat had been king of Judah—Joram son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah became king.

He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years.

He followed the practices of the kings of Israel—whatever the House of Ahab did, for he had married a daughter^f*daughter* Emendation yields "sister"; cf. v. 26. of Ahab—and he did what was displeasing to GOD.

However, GOD refrained from destroying Judah, for the sake of God's servant David, in accordance with God's promise to maintain a lamp for his descendants for all time.

During his reign, the Edomites rebelled against Judah's rule and set up a king of their own.

Joram crossed over to Zair with all his chariotry. He arose by night and attacked the Edomites, who were surrounding him and the chariot commanders; but^g*He arose by night ... but* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. his troops fled to their homes.

Thus Edom fell away from Judah, as is still the case. Libnah likewise fell away at that time.

The other events of Joram's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Joram rested with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David; his son Ahaziah succeeded him as king.

In the twelfth year of King Joram son of Ahab of Israel, Ahaziah son of Joram became king of Judah.

Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year; his mother's name was Athaliah daughter of King Omri of Israel.

He walked in the ways of the House of Ahab and did what was displeasing to GOD, like the House of Ahab, for he was related by marriage to the House of Ahab.

He marched with Joram son of Ahab to battle against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-gilead, but the Arameans wounded Joram.

King Joram retired to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that the Arameans had inflicted upon him at Ramah, when he fought against King

Hazael of Aram. And King Ahaziah son of Joram of Judah went down to Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab while he was ill.

Chapter 9

Then the prophet Elisha summoned one of the disciples of the prophets and said to him, "Tie up your skirts,^a*Tie up your skirts See note at 4.29.</i> and take along this flask of oil, and go to Ramoth-gilead.*

When you arrive there, go and see Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi; get him to leave his comrades, and take him into an inner room.

Then take the flask of oil and pour some on his head, and say, 'Thus said GOD: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee without delay."

The young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.

When he arrived, the army commanders were sitting together. He said, "Commander, I have a message for you." "For which one of us?" Jehu asked. He answered, "For you, commander."

So [Jehu] arose and went inside; and [the disciple] poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: I anoint you king over the people of GOD, over Israel.

You shall strike down the House of Ahab your master; thus will I avenge on Jezebel the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of the other servants of GOD.

The whole House of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off every male belonging to Ahab, bond and free^b*bond and free See note at 1 Kings 14.10.</i> in Israel.*

I will make the House of Ahab like the House of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and like the House of Baasha son of Ahijah.

The dogs shall devour Jezebel in the field of Jezreel, with none to bury her." Then he opened the door and fled.

Jehu went out to the other officers of his master, and they asked him, "Is all well? What did that madman come to you for?" He said to them, "You know the man and his ranting!"

"You're lying," they said. "Tell us [the truth]." Then he replied, "Thus and thus he said: Thus said GOD: I anoint you king over Israel!"

Quickly each man took his cloak and placed it under him,^c*him I.e., Jehu.</i> on the top step.^d*the top step Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> They sounded the horn and proclaimed, "Jehu is king!"**

Thus Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi conspired against Joram.
Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth-gilead against King Hazael of Aram,

but King Joram had gone back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that the Arameans had inflicted on him in his battle with King Hazael of Aram.
Jehu said, "If such is your wish, allow no one to slip out of the town to go and report this in Jezreel."

Then Jehu mounted his chariot and drove to Jezreel; for Joram was lying ill there, and King Ahaziah of Judah had gone down to visit Joram.

The lookout was stationed on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the troop of Jehu as he approached. He called out, "I see a troop!" Joram said, "Dispatch a horseman to meet them and let him ask: Is all well?"

The horseman went to meet him, and he said, "The king inquires: Is all well?" Jehu replied, "What concern of yours is it whether all is well? Fall in behind me." The lookout reported: "The messenger has reached them, but has not turned back."

So he sent out a second horseman. He came to them and said, "Thus says the king: Is all well?" Jehu answered, "What concern of yours is it whether all is well? Fall in behind me."

And the lookout reported, "The messenger has reached them, but has not turned back. And it looks like the driving of Jehu son of Nimshi, who drives wildly."

Joram ordered, "Hitch up [the chariot]!" They hitched up his chariot; and King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah went out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.

When Joram saw Jehu, he asked, "Is all well, Jehu?" But Jehu replied, "How can all be well as long as your mother Jezebel carries on her countless whoredoms and sorceries?"

Thereupon Joram turned his horses^e *horses* Lit. "hands"; see note at 1 Kings 22.34. around and fled, crying out to Ahaziah, "Treason, Ahaziah!" But Jehu drew his bow and hit Joram between the shoulders,^f *shoulders* Lit. "arms." so that the arrow pierced his heart; and he collapsed in his chariot.

Jehu thereupon ordered his officer Bidkar, "Pick him up and throw him into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember how you and I were riding side by side behind his father Ahab, when G^{OD} made this pronouncement about him:

'I swear, I have taken note of the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons yesterday—declares G^{OD}. And I will requite you in this plot—declares G^{OD}.' So pick him up and throw him unto the plot in accordance with the word of G^{OD}."

On seeing this, King Ahaziah of Judah fled along the road to Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him and said, "Shoot him down too!" [And they shot him] in his chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is near Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo and died there.

His servants conveyed him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and they buried him in his grave with his ancestors, in the City of David.

(Ahaziah had become king over Judah in the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab.)

Jehu went on to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard of it, she painted her eyes with kohl and dressed her hair, and she looked out of the window.

As Jehu entered the gate, she called out, "Is all well, Zimri, murderer of your master?"^g *Zimri, murderer of your master* See 1 Kings 16.8-20.

He looked up toward the window and said, "Who is on my side, who?" And two or three eunuchs leaned out toward him.

"Throw her down," he said. They threw her down; and her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled her.

Then he went inside and ate and drank. And he said, "Attend to that cursed woman and bury her, for she was a king's daughter."

So they went to bury her; but all they found of her were the skull, the feet, and the hands.

They came back and reported to him; and he said, "It is just as G^{OD} spoke through Elijah the Tishbite—God's servant: The dogs shall devour the flesh of Jezebel in the field of Jezreel; and the carcass of Jezebel shall be like dung on the ground, in the field of Jezreel, so that none will be able to say: 'This was Jezebel.'"

Chapter 10

Ahab had seventy descendants in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria, to the elders and officials of Jezreel^h

marker">a</sup><i class="footnote">of Jezreel Emendation yields
"of the city."</i> and to the guardians of [the children] of Ahab, as
follows:

"Now, when this letter reaches you—since your master's sons are with you
and you also have chariots and horses, and a fortified city and weapons—
select the best and the most suitable of your master's sons and set him
on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house."

But they were overcome by fear, for they thought, "If the two kings could
not stand up to him, how can we?"

The steward of the palace and the governor of the city and the elders and
the guardians sent this message to Jehu: "We are your subjects, and we
shall do whatever you tell us to. We shall not proclaim anyone king; do
whatever you like."

He wrote them a second time: "If you are on my side and are ready to obey
me, take the heads of the attendants of<sup class="footnote-
marker">b</sup><i class="footnote">the attendants of Force of Heb.
uncertain; cf. next verse.</i> your master's sons and come<sup
class="footnote-marker">c</sup><i class="footnote">come Targum and
Septuagint read "and bring them."</i> to me in Jezreel tomorrow at this
time." Now the princes, seventy in number, were with the notables of the
town, who were rearing them.

But when the letter reached them, they took the princes and slaughtered
all seventy of them; they put their heads in baskets and sent them to him
in Jezreel.

A messenger came and reported to him: "They have brought the heads of the
princes." He said, "Pile them up in two heaps at the entrance of the gate
before morning."

In the morning he went out and stood there; and he said to all the
people, "Are you blameless?^d<i
class="footnote">Are you blameless? Or "You are blameless."</i>
True, I conspired against my master and killed him; but who struck down
all of these?

Know, then, that nothing that G<small>OD</small> has spoken concerning
the House of Ahab shall remain unfulfilled, for G<small>OD</small> has
done what was announced through Elijah—God's servant."

And Jehu struck down all that were left of the House of Ahab in Jezreel—
and all his notables, intimates, and priests—till he left him no
survivor.

He then set out for Samaria. On the way, when he was at Beth-eked of the
shepherds,

Jehu came upon the kinsmen of King Ahaziah of Judah. "Who are you?" he
asked. They replied, "We are the kinsmen of Ahaziah, and we have come to
pay our respects to the sons of the king and the sons of the queen
mother."

"Take them alive!" he said. They took them alive and then slaughtered
them at the pit of Beth-eked, forty-two of them; he did not spare a
single one.

He went on from there, and he met Jehonadab son of Rechab coming toward
him. He greeted him and said to him, "Are you as wholehearted with me as
I am with you?" "I am," Jehonadab replied. "If so," [said Jehu,] "give me
your hand." He gave him his hand and [Jehu] helped him into the chariot.
"Come with me," he said, "and see my zeal for G<small>OD</small>." And he
was taken along in the chariot.

Arriving in Samaria, [Jehu] struck down all the survivors of [the House
of] Ahab in Samaria, until he wiped it out, fulfilling the word that
G<small>OD</small> had spoken to Elijah.

Jehu assembled all the people and said to them, "Ahab served Baal little;
Jehu shall serve him much!

Therefore, summon to me all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers, and
all his priests: don't let a single one fail to come, for I am going to

hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever fails to come shall forfeit his life." Jehu was acting with guile in order to exterminate the worshipers of Baal.

Jehu gave orders to convoke a solemn assembly for Baal, and one was proclaimed.

Jehu sent word throughout Israel, and all the worshipers of Baal came, not one remained behind. They came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was filled from end to end.

He said to the wardrobe^e*wardrobe* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. manager, "Bring out the vestments for all the worshipers of Baal"; and he brought vestments out for them.

Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab came into the temple of Baal, and they said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and make sure that there are no worshipers of G^{OD} among you, but only worshipers of Baal."

So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. But Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside and had said, "Whoever permits the escape of a single one of those whom I commit to your charge shall forfeit life for life."

When Jehu had finished presenting the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the officers, "Come in and strike them down; don't let a single one get away!" The guards and the officers struck them down with the sword and left them lying where they were; then they proceeded to the interior^f*interior* Lit. "city." of the temple of Baal. They brought out the pillars^g*pillars* Emendation yields "sacred posts"; cf. Deut. 12.3. of the temple of Baal and burned them.

They destroyed the pillar^h*pillar* Emendation yields "altar." of Baal, and they tore down the temple of Baal and turned it into latrines, as is still the case.

Thus Jehu eradicated the Baal from Israel.

However, Jehu did not turn away from the sinful objects by which Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to sin, namely, the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan.

G^{OD}

said to Jehu, "Because you have acted well and done what was pleasing to Me, having carried out all that I desired upon the House of Ahab, four generations of your descendants shall occupy the throne of Israel."

But Jehu was not careful to follow the Teaching of G^{OD}, the God of Israel, with all his heart; he did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.

In those days G^{OD} began to reduce Israel; and Hazael harassed them throughout the territory of Israel east of the Jordan, all the land of Gilead—the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites—from Aroer, by the Wadi Arnon, up to Gilead and Bashan.

The other events of Jehu's reign, and all his actions, and all his exploits, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Jehu rested with his ancestors and he was buried in Samaria; he was succeeded as king by his son Jehoahaz.

Jehu reigned over Israel for twenty-eight years in Samaria.

Chapter 11

When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, learned that her son was dead, she promptly killed off all who were of royal stock.

But Jehosheba, daughter of King Joram and sister of Ahaziah, secretly took Ahaziah's son Joash away from among the princes who were being slain, and [put]^a*[put] Cf. 2 Chron. 22.11.</i> him and his nurse in a bedroom. And they^b*they Cf. 2 Chron. 22.11 "she."</i> kept him hidden from Athaliah so that he was not put to death. He stayed with her for six years, hidden in the House of GOD,^c*in the House of GOD Jehosheba was the wife of the high priest Jehoiada; cf. 2 Chron. 22.11.</i> while Athaliah reigned over the land.***

In the seventh year, Jehoiada sent for the chiefs of the hundreds of the Carites^d*Carites Perhaps the Cherethites (cf. 2 Sam. 20.23) or the Carians. They were members of the king's bodyguard.</i> and of the guards, and had them come to him in the House of GOD. He made a pact with them, exacting an oath from them in the House of GOD, and he showed them the king's son.*

He instructed them: "This is what you must do: One-third of those who are on duty for the week shall maintain guard^e*shall maintain guard Heb. "and who keep guard."</i> over the royal palace;*

another third shall be [stationed] at the Sur Gate;^f*Sur Gate Cf. 2 Chron. 23.5 "Foundation Gate."</i> and the other third shall be at the gate behind*

the guards; you shall keep guard over the House on every side.^g*the guards; ... on every side Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i>*

The two divisions of yours who are off duty this week shall keep guard over the House of GOD for the protection of the king. You shall surround the king on every side, with your arms at the ready; and whoever breaks through the ranks shall be killed. Stay close to the king in his comings and goings."

The chiefs of hundreds did just as Jehoiada ordered: Each took his men—those who were on duty that week and those who were off duty that week—and they presented themselves to Jehoiada the priest.

The priest gave the chiefs of hundreds King David's spears^h*spears Cf. 2 Chron. 23.9, which adds "and shields."</i> and quivers that were kept in the House of GOD.*

The guards, with their arms at the ready, stationed themselves—from the south end of the House to the north end of the House, at the altar and the House—to guard the king on every side.

[Jehoiada] then brought out the king's son, and placed upon him the crown and the insignia.ⁱ*insignia Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> They anointed him and proclaimed him king; they clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"*

When Athaliah heard the shouting of the guards [and] the people, she came out to the people in the House of GOD.

She looked about and saw the king standing by the pillar, as was the custom, the chiefs with their trumpets beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Athaliah rent her garments and cried out, "Treason, treason!"

Then the priest Jehoiada gave the command to the army officers, the chiefs of hundreds, and said to them, "Take her out between the ranks^j*between the ranks Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> and, if anyone follows her, put him to*

the sword." For the priest thought: "Let her not be put to death in the House of GOD."

They cleared a passageway for her and she entered the royal palace through the horses' entrance: there she was put to death.

And Jehoiada solemnized the covenant between GOD, on the one hand, and the king and the people, on the other—as well as between the king and the people—that they should be GOD's people. Thereupon all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal. They tore it down and smashed its altars and images to bits, and they slew Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars. [Jehoiada] the priest then placed guards over the House of GOD.

He took the chiefs of hundreds, the Carites,^k*Carites* See note at v. 4. the guards, and all the people of the land, and they escorted the king from the House of GOD into the royal palace by the gate of the guards. And he ascended the royal throne.

All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. As for Athaliah, she had been put to the sword in the royal palace.

Chapter 12

Jehoash was seven years old when he became king.

Jehoash began his reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

All his days Jehoash did what was pleasing to GOD, as the priest Jehoiada instructed him.

The shrines, however, were not removed; the people continued to sacrifice and offer at the shrines.

Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money, current money, brought into the House of GOD as sacred donations—any money that someone may pay as^a*any money that someone may pay as* Or "any money for one's being entered [in the census], or"; cf. Rashi and Exod. 30.11-16. the money equivalent of persons,^b*money equivalent of persons* See Lev. 27.2-8. or any other money that someone may be minded to bring to the House of GOD—

let the priests receive it, each from his benefactor; they, in turn, shall make repairs on the House, wherever damage may be found."

But in the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, [it was found that] the priests had not made the repairs on the House.

So King Jehoash summoned the priest Jehoiada and the other priests and said to them, "Why have you not kept the House in repair? Now do not accept money from your benefactors anymore, but have it donated for the repair of the House."

The priests agreed that they would neither accept money from the people nor make repairs on the House.

And the priest Jehoiada took a chest and bored a hole in its lid. He placed it at the right side of the altar as one entered the House of GOD, and the priestly guards of the threshold deposited there all the money that was brought into the House of GOD.

Whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, the royal scribe and the high priest would come up and put the money accumulated in the House of GOD into bags, and they would count it.

Then they would deliver the money that was weighed out^c*that was weighed out* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. to the overseers of the work, who were in charge of the House of GOD. These, in turn, used

to pay the carpenters and the laborers who worked on the House of GOD, and the masons and the stonecutters. They also paid for wood and for quarried stone with which to make the repairs on the House of GOD, and for every other expenditure that had to be made in repairing the House. However, no silver bowls and no snuffers, basins, or trumpets—no vessels of gold or silver—were made at the House of GOD from the money brought into the House of GOD; this was given only to the overseers of the work for the repair of the House of GOD. No check was kept on those to whom the money was delivered to pay the workers; for they dealt honestly. Money brought as a reparation offering or as a purgation offering^d*as a reparation offering or as a purgation offering* See Lev. 5.15. was not deposited in the House of GOD; it went to the priests. At that time, King Hazael of Aram came up and attacked Gath and captured it; and Hazael proceeded to march on Jerusalem. Thereupon King Joash of Judah took all the objects that had been consecrated by his predecessors, Kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah of Judah, and by himself, and all the gold that there was in the treasuries of the Temple of GOD and in the royal palace, and he sent them to King Hazael of Aram, who then turned back from his march on Jerusalem. The other events of Joash's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah. His courtiers formed a conspiracy against Joash and assassinated him at Beth-millo that leads down to Silla.^e*that leads down to Silla* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The courtiers who assassinated him were Jozacar son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer. He died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David; and his son Amaziah succeeded him as king.

Chapter 13

In the twenty-third year of King Joash son of Ahaziah of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria—for seventeen years. He did what was displeasing to GOD. He persisted in the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he did not depart from them. GOD was angry with Israel and repeatedly delivered them into the hands of King Hazael of Aram and into the hands of Ben-hadad son of Hazael. But Jehoahaz pleaded with GOD; and GOD listened to him, having seen the suffering that the king of Aram inflicted upon Israel. So GOD granted Israel a deliverer, and they gained their freedom from Aram; and Israel dwelt in its homes as before. However, they did not depart from the sins that the House of Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit; they persisted in them. Even the sacred post^a*sacred post* Used in worship of the goddess Asherah. ^b*This verse would read well after v. 3.* In fact, Jehoahaz was left with a force of only fifty riders, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Aram had decimated them and trampled them like the dust under his feet.

The other events of Jehoahaz's reign, and all his actions and his exploits, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. Jehoahaz rested with his ancestors and he was buried in Samaria; his son Joash succeeded him as king.

In the thirty-seventh year of King Joash of Judah, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king of Israel in Samaria—for sixteen years. He did what was displeasing to OD; he did not depart from any of the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he persisted in them.

The other events of Joash's reign, and all his actions, and his exploits in his war with King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Joash rested with his ancestors and Jeroboam occupied his throne; Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Elisha had been stricken with the illness of which he was to die, and King Joash of Israel went down to see him. He wept over him and cried, "Father, father! Israel's chariots and riders!"^c*Israel's chariots and riders* On Elisha as defender of Israel, see chapters 6-8.

Elisha said to him, "Get a bow and arrows"; and he brought him a bow and arrows.

Then he said to the king of Israel, "Grasp the bow!" And when he had grasped it, Elisha put his hands over the king's hands. "Open the window toward the east," he said; and he opened it. Elisha said, "Shoot!" and he shot. Then he said, "An arrow of victory for OD ! An arrow of victory over Aram! You shall rout Aram completely at Aphek."

He said, "Now pick up the arrows." And he picked them up. "Strike the ground!" he said to the king of Israel; and he struck three times and stopped.

The agent of God was angry with him and said to him, "If only you had struck^d*If only you had struck* Lit. "to strike." five or six times! Then you would have annihilated Aram; as it is, you shall defeat Aram only three times."

Elisha died and he was buried. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land at the coming of every year.^e*at the coming of every year* Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields "year by year."

Once a man was being buried, when the people caught sight of such a band; so they threw the man^f*the man* I.e., the corpse. into Elisha's grave and made off.^g*made off* Heb. "he made off." When the [dead] man came in contact with Elisha's bones, he came to life and stood up.

King Hazael of Aram had oppressed the Israelites throughout the reign of Jehoahaz.

But OD was gracious and merciful to them, and turned back to them for the sake of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [God] refrained from destroying them, and still did not cast them out from the divine presence.

When King Hazael of Aram died, his son Ben-hadad succeeded him as king; and then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recovered from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Joash defeated him, and he recovered the towns of Israel.

Chapter 14

In the second year of King Joash son of Joahaz of Israel, Amaziah son of King Joash of Judah became king.

He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. He did what was pleasing to GOD, but not like his forefather David; he did just as his father Joash had done. However, the shrines were not removed; the people continued to sacrifice and make offerings at the shrines.

Once he had the kingdom firmly in his grasp, he put to death the courtiers who had assassinated his father the king.

But he did not put to death the children of the assassins, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Teaching of Moses, where GOD commanded, "Parents shall not be put to death for children, nor children be put to death for parents; they shall be put to death only for their own crime."^a
So Deut. 24.16.

He defeated ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and he captured Sela in battle and renamed it Joktheel, as is still the case.

Then Amaziah sent envoys to King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu of Israel, with this message: "Come, let us confront^b
confront In battle." each other."

King Jehoash of Israel sent back this message to King Amaziah of Judah: "The thistle in Lebanon sent this message to the cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' But a wild beast in Lebanon went by and trampled down the thistle.

Because you have defeated Edom, you have become arrogant. Stay home and enjoy your glory, rather than provoke disaster and fall, dragging Judah down with you."

But Amaziah paid no heed; so King Jehoash of Israel advanced, and he and King Amaziah of Judah confronted each other at Beth-shemesh in Judah.

Judah was routed by Israel, and [the Judahites] fled to their homes.

King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah son of Jehoash son of Ahaziah of Judah at Beth-shemesh. He marched on Jerusalem, and he made a breach of four hundred cubits in the wall of Jerusalem, from^c
from Heb. "at." the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate.

He carried off all the gold and silver and all the vessels that there were in the House of GOD and in the treasuries of the royal palace, as well as hostages; and he returned to Samaria.

The other events of Jehoash's reign, and all his actions and exploits, and his war with King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Jehoash rested with his ancestors, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; his son Jeroboam succeeded him as king.

King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel.

The other events of Amaziah's reign are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

A conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish; but they sent agents after him to Lachish, and they killed him there. They brought back his body on horses, and he was buried with his ancestors in Jerusalem, in the City of David.

Then all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and proclaimed him king to succeed his father Amaziah.

It was he who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah, after King [Amaziah] rested with his ancestors.

In the fifteenth year of King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah, King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel became king in Samaria—for forty-one years.

He did what was displeasing to GOD; he did not depart from all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

It was he who restored the territory of Israel from Lebo-hamath to the sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the promise that the ETERNAL, the God of Israel, had made through God's servant, the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-hepher. For GOD saw the very bitter plight of Israel, with neither bond nor free^d*bond...free See note at 1 Kings 14.10.</i> left, and with none to help Israel. And GOD resolved not to blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; and he delivered them through Jeroboam son of Joash. The other events of Jeroboam's reign, and all his actions and exploits, how he fought and recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel,^e*for Judah in Israel Emendation yields "for Israel."</i> are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. Jeroboam rested with his ancestors, the kings of Israel, and his son Zechariah succeeded him as king.**

Chapter 15

In the twenty-seventh year of King Jeroboam of Israel, Azariah son of King Amaziah of Judah became king. He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. He did what was pleasing to GOD, just as his father Amaziah had done. However, the shrines were not removed; the people continued to sacrifice and make offerings at the shrines. GOD struck the king with a plague, and he was a leper until the day of his death; he lived in isolated quarters,^a*in isolated quarters Meaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> while Jotham, the king's son, was in charge of the palace and governed the people of the land. The other events of Azariah's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah. Azariah rested with his ancestors, and he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David; his son Jotham succeeded him as king. In the thirty-eighth year of King Azariah of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in Samaria—for six months. He did what was displeasing to GOD, as his predecessors had done; he did not depart from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against him and struck him down before the people^b*before the people Some Septuagint mss. read "at Ibleam."</i> and killed him, and succeeded him as king. The other events of Zechariah's reign are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. This was in accord with the word that GOD had spoken to Jehu:^c*the word that GOD had spoken to Jehu Cf. 10.30.</i> "Four generations of your descendants shall occupy the throne of Israel." And so it came about. Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of King Uzziah of Judah, and he reigned in Samaria one month. Then Menahem son of Gadi set out from Tirzah and came to Samaria; he attacked Shallum son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him, and he succeeded him as king. The other events of Shallum's reign, and the conspiracy that he formed, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.***

At that time, [marching] from Tirzah,^d*[marching] from Tirzah* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Menahem subdued Tiphshah and all who were in it, and its territory; and because it did not surrender, he massacred [its people] and ripped open all its pregnant women.

In the thirty-ninth year of King Azariah of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel in Samaria—for ten years.

He did what was displeasing to G^{OD}; throughout his days he did not depart from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

King Pul of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver that he might support him and strengthen his hold on the kingdom.

Menahem exacted the money from Israel: every man of means had to pay fifty shekels of silver for the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria withdrew and did not remain in the land.

The other events of Menahem's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

Menahem rested with his ancestors, and his son Pekahiah succeeded him as king.

In the fiftieth year of King Azariah of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria—for two years.

He did what was displeasing to G^{OD}; he did not depart from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

His aide, Pekah son of Remaliah, conspired against him and struck him down in the royal palace in Samaria; with him were fifty Gileadites, with men from Argob and Arieah;^e*with men from Argob and Arieah* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. and he killed him and succeeded him as king.

The other events of Pekahiah's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

In the fifty-second year of King Azariah of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king over Israel and Samaria—for twenty years.

He did what was displeasing to G^{OD}; he did not depart from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

In the days of King Pekah of Israel, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor—Gilead, Galilee, the entire region of Naphtali; and he deported the inhabitants^f*the inhabitants* Heb. "them." to Assyria.

Hoshea son of Elah conspired against Pekah son of Remaliah, attacked him, and killed him. He succeeded him as king in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.

The other events of Pekah's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

In the second year of King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel, Jotham son of King Uzziah of Judah became king.

He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok.

He did what was pleasing to G^{OD}, just as his father Uzziah had done.

However, the shrines were not removed; the people continued to sacrifice and make offerings at the shrines. It was he who built the Upper Gate of the House of G^{OD}.

The other events of Jotham's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

In those days, G^{OD} began to incite King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah.

Jotham rested with his ancestors, and he was buried with his ancestors in the city of his forefather David; his son Ahaz succeeded him as king.

Chapter 16

In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of King Jotham of Judah became king.

Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was pleasing to the ETERNAL his God, as his forefather David had done, but followed the ways of the kings of Israel. He even consigned his son to the fire, in the abhorrent fashion of the nations that GOD had dispossessed before the Israelites. He sacrificed and made offerings at the shrines, on the hills, and under every leafy tree.

Then King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel advanced on Jerusalem for battle. They besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome [him].

At that time King Rezin of Aram recovered Elath for Aram;^a *Aram* Emendation yields "Edom." he drove out the Judahites from Elath, and Edomites came to Elath and settled there, as is still the case.

Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria to say, "I am your servant and your son; come and deliver me from the hands of the king of Aram and from the hands of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." Ahaz took the gold and silver that were on hand in the House of GOD and in the treasuries of the royal palace and sent them as a gift to the king of Assyria.

The king of Assyria responded to his request; the king of Assyria marched against Damascus and captured it. He deported its inhabitants^b *its inhabitants* Heb. "it." to Kir and put Rezin to death.

When King Ahaz went to Damascus to greet King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, he saw the altar in Damascus. King Ahaz sent the priest Uriah a sketch of the altar and a detailed plan of its construction.

The priest Uriah did just as King Ahaz had instructed him from Damascus; the priest Uriah built the altar before King Ahaz returned from Damascus. When the king returned from Damascus, and when the king saw the altar, the king drew near the altar, ascended it, and offered his burnt offering and grain offering; he poured his libation, and he dashed the blood of his offering of well-being against the altar.

As for the bronze altar that had been before GOD, he moved it from its place in front of the temple, between the [new] altar and the House of GOD,^c *between the [new] altar and the House of GOD* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. and placed it on the north side of the [new] altar.

And King Ahaz commanded the priest Uriah: "On the great altar^d *the great altar* I.e., the new one. you shall offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering and the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, with the burnt offerings of all the people of the land, their grain offerings and their libations. And against it you shall dash the blood of all the burnt offerings and all the blood of the sacrifices. And I will decide about the bronze altar."^e *the bronze altar* I.e., the old one, cf. v. 14.

Uriah did just as King Ahaz commanded.

King Ahaz cut off the insets—the laver stands—and removed the lavers from them. He also removed the tank from the bronze oxen that supported it and set it on a stone pavement—

on account of the king of Assyria.^f*on account of the king of Assyria* I.e., because of the metal given him in tribute. He also extended to the House of GOD the sabbath passage that had been built in the palace and the king's outer entrance.^g*the sabbath passage ... outer entrance* Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

The other events of Ahaz's reign, and his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David; his son Hezekiah succeeded him as king.

Chapter 17

In the twelfth year of King Ahaz of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king over Israel in Samaria—for nine years.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, though not as much as the kings of Israel who preceded him.

King Shalmaneser marched against him, and Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute.

But the king of Assyria caught Hoshea in an act of treachery: he had sent envoys to King So of Egypt, and he had not paid the tribute to the king of Assyria, as in previous years. And the king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison.

Then the king of Assyria marched against the whole land; he came to Samaria and besieged it for three years.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah, at the [River] Habor, at the River Gozan, and in the towns of Media.

This happened because the Israelites sinned against the ETERNAL their God, who had freed them from the land of Egypt, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods and followed the customs of the nations that GOD had dispossessed before the Israelites and the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.

The Israelites committed^a*committed* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. against the ETERNAL their God acts that were not right: They built for themselves shrines in all their settlements, from watchtowers to fortified cities;

they set up pillars and sacred posts^b*sacred posts* See note at 13.6. for themselves on every lofty hill and under every leafy tree; and they offered sacrifices there, at all the shrines, like the nations whom GOD had driven into exile before them. They committed wicked acts to provoke GOD's anger, and they worshiped fetishes concerning which GOD had said to them, "You must not do this thing."

GOD

warned Israel and Judah by every prophet [and] every seer, saying: "Turn back from your wicked ways, and observe My commandments and My laws, according to all the Teaching that I commanded your ancestors and that I transmitted to you through My servants the prophets."

But they did not obey; they stiffened their necks, like their ancestors who did not have faith in the ETERNAL their God; they spurned God's laws and the covenant that had been made with their ancestors, and the warnings they had been given. They went after delusion and were deluded; [they imitated] the nations that were about them, which GOD had forbidden them to emulate.

They rejected all the commandments of the ETERNAL their God; they made molten idols for themselves—two calves—and they made a sacred post^{class="footnote-marker">c}<i class="footnote">sacred post See note at 13.6.</i> and they bowed down to all the host of heaven, and they worshiped Baal.</sup>

They consigned their sons and daughters to the fire; they practiced augury and divination, and gave themselves over to what was displeasing to GOD—and provoked anger.

GOD was incensed at Israel and banished them from the divine presence; none was left but the tribe of Judah alone.

Nor did Judah keep the commandments of the ETERNAL their God; they followed the customs that Israel had practiced.

So GOD spurned all the offspring of Israel, and afflicted them and delivered them into the hands of plunderers, and finally cast them out from the divine presence.

For Israel broke away from the House of David, and they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Jeroboam caused Israel to stray from GOD and to commit great sin,

and the Israelites persisted in all the sins that Jeroboam had committed; they did not depart from them.

In the end, GOD removed Israel from the divine presence, as they had been warned through all God's servants the prophets. So the Israelites were deported from their land to Assyria, as is still the case.

The king of Assyria brought [people] from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and he settled them in the towns of Samaria in place of the Israelites; they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its towns. When they first settled there, they did not worship GOD; so GOD sent lions against them that killed some of them. They said to the king of Assyria: "The nations that you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know the rules of the God of the land; therefore [that God] has let lions loose against them that are killing them—for they do not know the rules of the God of the land."

The king of Assyria gave an order: "Send there one of the priests whom you have deported; let him^{class="footnote-marker">d}<i class="footnote">him Heb. "them."</i> go and dwell there, and let him teach them the practices of the God of the land."</sup>

So one of the priests whom they had exiled from Samaria came and settled in Bethel; he taught them how to worship GOD.

However, each nation continued to make its own gods and to set them up in the cult places that had been made by the people of Samaria; each nation [set them up] in the towns in which it lived.

Inhabitants from Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and inhabitants from Cuth made Nergal, and inhabitants from Hamath made Ashima, and the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children [as offerings] to Adrammelech and Anamelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

They worshiped GOD, but they also appointed from their own ranks priests of the shrines, who officiated for them in the cult places. They worshiped GOD, while serving their own gods according to the practices of the nations from which they had been deported.

To this day, they follow their former practices. They do not worship GOD [properly]. They do not follow the laws and practices, the Teaching and Instruction that GOD enjoined upon the descendants of Jacob—who was given the name Israel—

having made a covenant with them and commanding them: "You shall worship no other gods; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them.

You must worship only the ETERNAL your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great might and with an outstretched

arm: to whom alone shall you bow down and to whom alone shall you sacrifice.
 You shall observe faithfully, all your days, the laws and the practices; the Teaching and Instruction that I^{class="footnote-marker">e}*class="footnote">I Heb. "He."</i> wrote down for you; do not worship other gods.
 Do not forget the covenant that I made with you; do not worship other gods.
 Worship only the ETERNAL your God, and you will be saved from the hands of all your enemies."
 But they did not obey; they continued their former practices. Those nations worshiped GOD, but they also served their idols. To this day their children and their children's children do as their ancestors did.*

Chapter 18

In the third year of King Hoshea son of Elah of Israel, Hezekiah son of King Ahaz of Judah became king.
 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years; his mother's name was Abi^{class="footnote-marker">a}*class="footnote">Abi Cf. 2 Chron. 29.1 "Abijah."</i> daughter of Zechariah.
 He did what was pleasing to GOD, just as his forefather David had done.
 He abolished the shrines and smashed the pillars and cut down the sacred post.^{class="footnote-marker">b}*class="footnote">sacred post See note at 13.6.</i> He also broke into pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until that time the Israelites had been offering sacrifices to it; it was called Nehushtan.
 He trusted only in the ETERNAL the God of Israel; there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those before him.
 He clung to GOD; he did not hesitate to be directed,^{class="footnote-marker">c}*class="footnote">hesitate to be directed Lit. "turn away from following Him."</i> but kept the commandments that GOD had given to Moses.
 And GOD was always with him; he was successful wherever he turned. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. He overran Philistia as far as Gaza and its border areas, from watchtower to fortified town.
 In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of King Hoshea son of Elah of Israel, King Shalmaneser of Assyria marched against Samaria and besieged it, and he^{class="footnote-marker">d}*class="footnote">he So some mss. and ancient versions; most mss. and editions read "they."</i> captured it at the end of three years. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of King Hoshea of Israel, Samaria was captured;
 and the king of Assyria deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in^{class="footnote-marker">e}*class="footnote">settled them in Lit. "led them to."</i> Halah, along the Habor [and] the River Gozan, and in the towns of Media.
 [This happened] because they did not obey the ETERNAL their God; they transgressed God's covenant—all that Moses the servant of GOD had commanded. They did not obey and they did not fulfill it.
 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria marched against all the fortified towns of Judah and seized them.*****

King Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong; withdraw from me; and I shall bear whatever you impose on me." So the king of Assyria imposed upon King Hezekiah of Judah a payment of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was on hand in the House of GOD and in the treasuries of the palace.

At that time Hezekiah cut down the doors and the doorposts^{class="footnote-marker">f}<i class="footnote">doorpostsMeaning of Heb. uncertain.</i> of the Temple of GOD, which King Hezekiah had overlaid [with gold], and gave them to the king of Assyria.</sup>

But the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabсарis, and the Rabshakeh^{class="footnote-marker">g}<i class="footnote">Tartan...Rabсарis...RabshakehAssyrian titles.</i> from Lachish with a large force to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. They marched up to Jerusalem; and when they arrived, they took up a position near the conduit of the Upper Pool, by the road of the Fuller's Field. They summoned the king; and Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them.</sup>

The Rabshakeh said to them, "You tell Hezekiah: Thus said the Great King, the King of Assyria: What makes you so confident? You must think that mere talk is counsel and valor for war! Look, on whom are you relying, that you have rebelled against me? You rely, of all things, on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which enters and punctures the palm of anyone who leans on it! That's what Pharaoh king of Egypt is like to all who rely on him. And if you tell me that you are relying on the ETERNAL your God: is this not the very one whose shrines and altars Hezekiah did away with, telling Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship only at this altar in Jerusalem'?"

Come now, make this wager with my master, the king of Assyria: I'll give you two thousand horses if you can produce riders to mount them. So how could you refuse anything even to the deputy of one of my master's lesser servants, relying on Egypt for chariots and riders? And do you think I have marched against this land to destroy it without GOD ? It was GOD who told me: Go up against that land and destroy it."

Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah replied to the Rabshakeh, "Please, speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in Judean in the hearing of the people on the wall."

But the Rabshakeh answered them, "Was it to your master and to you that my master sent me to speak those words? It was precisely to the men who are sitting on the wall—who will have to eat their dung and drink their urine with you."

And the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in Judean: "Hear the words of the Great King, the King of Assyria.

Thus said the king: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my^{class="footnote-marker">h}<i class="footnote">mySo several mss. and ancient versions; most mss. and editions read "his."</i> hands.</sup>

Don't let Hezekiah make you rely on GOD, saying: GOD will surely save us: this city will not fall into the hands of the king of Assyria.

Don't listen to Hezekiah. For thus said the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me,^{class="footnote-marker">i}<i class="footnote">to meI.e., to my representative the Rabshakeh.</i> so that you may all eat from your vines and your fig trees and drink water from your cisterns,</sup>

until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of grain [fields] and vineyards, of bread and wine, of olive oil and honey, so that you may live and not die. Don't listen to Hezekiah, who misleads you by saying, 'GOD will save us.'

Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria?

Where were the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where were the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? [And] did they^j*they* I.e., the gods of Samaria. save Samaria from me?

Which among all the gods of [those] countries saved their countries from me, that GOD should save Jerusalem from me?"

But the people were silent and did not say a word in reply; for the king's order was: "Do not answer him."

And so Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and they reported to him what the Rabshakeh had said.

Chapter 19

When King Hezekiah heard this, he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the House of GOD. He also sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.

They said to him, "Thus said Hezekiah: This day is a day of distress, of chastisement, and of disgrace. The babes have reached the birthstool, but the strength to give birth is lacking.^a*The babes have reached the birthstool, but the strength to give birth is lacking* I.e., the situation is desperate and we are at a loss.

Perhaps the ETERNAL your God will take note of all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to blaspheme the living God, and will mete out judgment for the words that the ETERNAL your God has heard—if you will offer up prayer for the surviving remnant."

When King Hezekiah's ministers came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master as follows: Thus said GOD: Do not be frightened by the words of blasphemy against Me that you have heard from the minions of the king of Assyria. I will delude^b*delude* Lit. "put a spirit in." him; he will hear a rumor and return to his land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his land."

The Rabshakeh, meanwhile, heard that [the king] had left Lachish; he turned back and found the king of Assyria attacking Libnah. But [the king of Assyria] learned that King Tirhakah of Cush had come out to fight him; so he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, "Tell this to King Hezekiah of Judah: Do not let your God, on whom you are relying, mislead you into thinking that Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.

You yourself have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, how they have annihilated them; and can you escape?

Were the nations that my predecessors^c*predecessors* Lit.

"fathers." destroyed—Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the Beth-edenites in Telassar—saved by their gods?

Where is the king of Hamath? And the king of Arpad? And the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?"

Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers and read it. Hezekiah then went up to the House of GOD and spread it out before GOD.

And Hezekiah prayed to the ETERNAL and said, "O GOD of Hosts, Enthroned on the Cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. O ETERNAL One, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see. Hear the words that Sennacherib has sent to blaspheme the living God!

True, O ETERNAL One, the kings of Assyria have annihilated the nations and their lands, and have committed their gods to the flames and have destroyed them; for they are not gods, but the handiwork of mere mortals, wood and stone. But now, O ETERNAL One our God, deliver us from his hands, and let all the kingdoms of the earth know that You alone, O ETERNAL One, are God."

Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: "Thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: I have heard the prayer you have offered to Me concerning King Sennacherib of Assyria.

This is the word that GOD has spoken concerning him:
"Fair Maiden Zion despises you,
She mocks at you;
Fair Jerusalem shakes
Her head at you.
Whom have you blasphemed and reviled?
Against whom made loud your voice
And haughtily raised your eyes?
Against the Holy One of Israel!

Through your envoys you have blasphemed my Sovereign.
Because you thought,
'Thanks to my vast chariotry,
It is I who have climbed the highest mountains,
To the remotest parts of the Lebanon,
And have cut down its loftiest cedars,
Its choicest cypresses,
And have reached its remotest lodge,
^d
remotest lodge Cf. Isa. 37.24 "highest peak."
Its densest forest.
^e
Its densest forest Lit. "Its farmland forest"; exact meaning of Heb. uncertain.
It is I who have drawn
^f
drawn Or "dug"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. and drunk the waters of strangers;
I have dried up with the soles of my feet
All the streams of Egypt.'

Have you not heard? Of old
I planned that very thing,
I designed it long ago,
And now have fulfilled it.
And it has come to pass,
Laying waste fortified towns
In desolate heaps.
Their inhabitants are helpless,
Dismayed and shamed.
They were but grass of the field
And green

herbage,

Grass of the roofs that is blasted

Before the standing grain.

^g*standing grain* Emendation yields "east wind"; see note at Isa. 37.27.

I know your stayings

And your goings and comings,

And how you have raged against Me.

Because you have raged against Me,

And your tumult has reached My ears,

I will place My hook in your nose

And My bit between your jaws;

And I will make you go back by the road

By which you came.

"And this is the sign for you:^h*you* I.e., Hezekiah." This year you eat what grows of itself, and the next year what springs from that; and in the third year, sow and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. And the survivors of the House of Judah that have escaped shall regenerate its stock below and produce boughs above.

For a remnant shall come forth from Jerusalem,

Survivors from Mount Zion.

The zeal of

OD of Hosts

Shall bring this to pass.

Assuredly, thus said OD concerning the king of Assyria:

He shall not enter this city:

He shall not shoot an arrow at it,

Or advance upon it with a shield,

Or pile up a siege mound against it.

He shall go back

By the way he came;

He shall not enter this city

—declares OD.

I will protect and save this city for My sake,

And for the sake of My servant David."

That night an angel of OD went out and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp, and the following morning they were all dead corpses.

So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and retreated, and stayed in Nineveh.

While he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sarezer struck him down with the sword. They fled to the land of Ararat, and his son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king.

Chapter 20

In those days Hezekiah fell dangerously ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "Thus said OD: Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die; you will not get well." Thereupon Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to OD. He said,

"Please, O ETERNAL One, remember how I have walked before You sincerely and wholeheartedly, and have done what is pleasing to You." And Hezekiah wept profusely.

Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of OD came to him:

"Go back and say to Hezekiah, the ruler of My people: Thus said GOD, the God of your forefather David: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. I am going to heal you; on the third day you shall go up to the House of GOD. And I will add fifteen years to your life. I will also rescue you and this city from the hands of the king of Assyria. I will protect this city for My sake and for the sake of My servant David."—

Then Isaiah said, "Get a cake of figs." And they got one, and they applied it to the rash, and he recovered.—

Hezekiah asked Isaiah, "What is the sign that GOD will heal me and that I shall go up to the House of GOD on the third day?"

Isaiah replied, "This is the sign for you from GOD that GOD will do the thing that was promised: Shall^a *Shall* Cf. Targum.

the shadow advance ten steps or recede ten steps?"

Hezekiah said, "It is easy for the shadow to lengthen ten steps, but not for the shadow to recede ten steps."

So the prophet Isaiah called to GOD, and the shadow that had descended on the dial^b *dial* Heb. "steps." A model of a dial with steps has been discovered in Egypt.

of Ahaz was made to recede ten steps. At that time, King Berodach^c *Berodach* Several mss. and the parallel Isa. 39.1 read "Merodach." —baladan son of Baladan of Babylon sent [envoys with] a letter and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard about Hezekiah's illness.

Hezekiah heard about them^d *Hezekiah heard about them* Cf. Isa. 39.2 "Hezekiah was pleased by their coming." and he showed them all his treasure—house—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the fragrant oil—and his armory, and everything that was to be found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his palace or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah. "What," he demanded of him, "did those men say to you? Where have they come to you from?" "They have come," Hezekiah replied, "from a far country, from Babylon." Next he asked, "What have they seen in your palace?" And Hezekiah replied, "They have seen everything that is in my palace. There was nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of GOD: A time is coming when everything in your palace that your ancestors have stored up to this day will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will remain behind, said GOD.

And some of your sons, your own issue, whom you will have fathered, will be taken to serve as eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Hezekiah declared to Isaiah, "The word of GOD that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "It means that safety is assured for^e *safety is assured for* Lit. "there shall be safety and faithfulness in." my time."

The other events of Hezekiah's reign, and all his exploits, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought the water into the city, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Hezekiah rested with his ancestors, and his son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Hephzibah.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, following the abhorrent practices of the nations that GOD had dispossessed before the Israelites.

He rebuilt the shrines that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he erected altars for Baal and made a sacred post,^{class="footnote-marker">a}*class="footnote">sacred post See note at 13.6; cf. v. 7.</i> as King Ahab of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the host of heaven and worshiped them, and he built altars for them in the House of GOD, of which GOD had said, "I will establish My name in Jerusalem." He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the House of GOD.*

He consigned his son to the fire; he practiced soothsaying and divination, and consulted ghosts and familiar spirits; he did much that was displeasing to GOD—and provoked anger.

The sculptured image of Asherah^{class="footnote-marker">b}*class="footnote">sculptured image of Asherah See v. 4.</i> that he made he placed in the House concerning which GOD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this House and in Jerusalem, which I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will establish My name forever. And I will not again cause the feet of Israel to wander from the land that I gave to their ancestors, if they will but faithfully observe all that I have commanded them—all the Teachings with which My servant Moses charged them."*

But they did not obey, and Manasseh led them astray to do greater evil than the nations that GOD had destroyed before the Israelites.

Therefore GOD spoke through the prophets—God's servants: "Because King Manasseh of Judah has done these abhorrent things—he has outdone in wickedness all that the Amorites did before his time—and because he led Judah to sin with his fetishes, assuredly, thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: I am going to bring such a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that both ears of everyone who hears about it will tingle.

I will apply to Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the weights of the House of Ahab;^{class="footnote-marker">c}*class="footnote">apply to Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the weights of the House of Ahab I.e., I will bring the same fate upon it.</i> I will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down.*

And I will cast off the remnant of My own people and deliver them into the hands of their enemies. They shall be plunder and prey to all their enemies

because they have done what is displeasing to Me and have been provoking My anger from the day that their ancestors came out of Egypt to this day."

Moreover, Manasseh put so many innocent persons to death that he filled Jerusalem [with blood] from end to end—besides the sin he committed in causing Judah to do what was displeasing to GOD.

The other events of Manasseh's reign, and all his actions, and the sins he committed, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in the garden of his palace, in the garden of Uzza; and his son Amon succeeded him as king. Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, as his father Manasseh had done.

He walked in all the ways of his father, worshiping the fetishes that his father had worshiped and bowing down to them.

He forsook the ETERNAL, the God of his ancestors, and did not follow the way of GOD.

Amon's courtiers conspired against him; and they killed the king in his palace.

But the people of the land put to death all who had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his stead.

The other events of Amon's reign [and] his actions are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza; and his son Josiah succeeded him as king.

Chapter 22

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.

He did what was pleasing to GOD and he followed all the ways of his forefather David; he did not deviate to the right or to the left.

In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the scribe Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam to the House of GOD, saying,

"Go to the high priest Hilkiah and let him weigh^a *weigh* Meaning of Heb.

uncertain. Emendation yields "melt down," cf. v. 9.

the silver that has been deposited in the House of GOD, which the guards of the threshold have collected from the people.

And let it be delivered to the overseers of the work who are in charge at the House of GOD, that they in turn may pay it out to the workers that are in the House of GOD, for the repair of the House:

to the carpenters, the laborers, and the masons, and for the purchase of wood and quarried stones for repairing the House.

However, no check is to be kept on them for the silver that is delivered to them, for they deal honestly."

Then the high priest Hilkiah said to the scribe Shaphan, "I have found a scroll of the Teaching in the House of GOD." And Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan, who read it.

The scribe Shaphan then went to the king and reported to the king: "Your servants have melted down the silver that was deposited in the House, and they have delivered it to the overseers of the work who are in charge at the House of GOD."

The scribe Shaphan also told the king, "The high priest Hilkiah has given me a scroll"; and Shaphan read it to the king.

When the king heard the words of the scroll of the Teaching, he rent his clothes.

And the king gave orders to the priest Hilkiah, and to Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Michaiah, the scribe Shaphan, and Asaiah the king's minister:

"Go, inquire of GOD on my behalf, and on behalf of the people, and on behalf of all Judah, concerning the words of this scroll that has been found. For great indeed must be GOD's wrath that has been kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this scroll to do all that has been prescribed for us."

So the priest Hilkiah, and Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah—the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe—who was living in Jerusalem in the

Mishneh,^b *Mishneh* A quarter in Jerusalem; cf. Zeph. 1.10. and they spoke to her. She responded: "Thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: Say to the one who sent you to me: Thus said GOD: I am going to bring disaster upon this place and its inhabitants, in accordance with all the words of the scroll that the king of Judah has read. Because they have forsaken Me and have made offerings to other gods and provoked My anger with all their deeds, My wrath is kindled against this place and it shall not be quenched. But say this to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of GOD: Thus said the ETERNAL, the God of Israel: As for the words that you have heard—because your heart was softened and you humbled yourself before GOD when you heard what I decreed against this place and its inhabitants—that it will become a desolation and a curse—and because you rent your clothes and wept before Me, I for My part have listened—declares GOD. Assuredly, I will gather you to your ancestors and you will be laid in your tomb in peace. Your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place." So they brought back the reply to the king.

Chapter 23

At the king's summons, all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem assembled before him. The king went up to the House of GOD, together with the entire citizenry of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and prophets—all the people, young and old.^a *young and old* Or "from small to great." And he read to them the entire text of the covenant scroll that had been found in the House of GOD. The king stood by the pillar^b *by the pillar* Or "on a platform," cf. Targum. and solemnized the covenant before GOD: that they would follow GOD and observe God's commandments, injunctions, and laws with all their heart and soul; that they would fulfill all the terms of this covenant as inscribed upon the scroll. And all the people entered into^c *entered into* Cf. Targum. the covenant. Then the king ordered the high priest Hilkiah, the priests of the second rank, and the guards of the threshold to bring out of the Temple of GOD all the objects made for Baal and Asherah^d *Asherah* For this goddess, cf. 1 Kings 18.19; ordinarily *'asherah* is rendered "sacred post," e.g., 2 Kings 17.16. and all the host of heaven. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields^e *fields* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of Kidron, and he removed the ashes to Bethel. He suppressed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to make offerings^f *to make offerings* Lit. "and he offered." at the shrines in the towns of Judah and in the environs of Jerusalem, and those who made offerings to Baal, to the sun and moon and constellations—all the host of heaven. He brought out the [image of] Asherah from the House of GOD to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem, and burned it in the Kidron Valley; he beat it to dust and scattered its dust over the burial ground of the common people.

He tore down the cubicles of the consecrated workers^g*consecrated workers* Or "retainers"; meaning of Heb. *qedeshim* uncertain. in the House of GOD, at the place where the women wove coverings^h*coverings* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. for Asherah.

He brought all the priests from the towns of Judah [to Jerusalem] and defiled the shrines where the priests had been making offerings—from Geba to Beer-sheba. He also demolished the shrines of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua, the city prefect—which were on the left as one [entered] the city gate.ⁱ*which were on the left ... gate* Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

^j*This verse may be understood in connection with vv. 21-23.* The priests of the shrines, however, did not ascend the altar of GOD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread along with their kinsmen.

He also defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, so that no one might consign their son or daughter to the fire of Molech.

He did away with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance^k*at the entrance* Heb. "from entering." of the House of GOD, near the chamber of the eunuch Nathan-melech, which was in the precincts.^l*precincts* Meaning of Heb. uncertain. He burned the chariots of the sun.

And the king tore down the altars made by the kings of Judah on the roof by the upper chamber of Ahaz, and the altars made by Manasseh in the two courts of the House of GOD. He removed them quickly from there^m*removed them quickly from there* Heb. "ran from there." Emendation yields "smashed them there." and scattered their rubble in the Kidron Valley.

The king also defiled the shrines facing Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of the Destroyer,ⁿ*Mount of the Destroyer* Heb. *har ha-mashḥith*: a derogatory play on *har ha-mishḥah* ("Mount of Ointment"); Mishnah Middoth 2.4. which King Solomon of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom, the detestable thing of the Ammonites.^o*the shrines ... which King Solomon of Israel had built ... Ammonites* Cf. 1 Kings 11.5, 7.

He shattered their pillars and cut down their sacred posts^p*sacred posts* See note at 13.6. and covered their sites with human bones. As for the altar in Bethel [and] the shrine made by Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin—that altar, too, and the shrine as well, he tore down. He burned down the shrine and beat it to dust, and he burned the sacred post.^q*sacred post* See note at 13.6.

Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of GOD foretold by the agent of God who foretold these happenings.

He asked, "What is the marker I see there?" And the townspeople replied, "That is the grave of the agent of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel."^r*Cf. 1 Kings 13.1-3.*

"Let him be," he said. "Absolutely no one must disturb his bones." So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet^{class="footnote-marker">s}<i</sup>

class="footnote">together with the bones of the prophet See 1 Kings 13.31-32 and next note.</i> who came from Samaria.^t<i class="footnote">Samaria The prophet lived in Bethel, which, in Josiah's time, was part of the Assyrian province of Samaria.</i>

Josiah also abolished all the cult places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria, vexing [GOD]. He dealt with them just as he had done to Bethel:

He slew on the altars all the priests of the shrines who were there, and he burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

The king commanded all the people, "Offer the passover sacrifice to the ETERNAL your God as prescribed in this scroll of the covenant."

Now the passover sacrifice had not been offered in that manner in the days of the chieftains who ruled Israel, or during the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.

Only in the eighteenth year of King Josiah was such a passover sacrifice offered in that manner to GOD in Jerusalem.

Josiah also did away with the necromancers and the mediums,^u<i class="footnote">the necromancers and the mediums Lit. "the ghosts and the familiar spirits."</i> the oracle idols and the fetishes—all the detestable things that were to be seen in the land of Judah and Jerusalem. Thus he fulfilled the terms of the Teaching recorded in the scroll that the priest Hilkiah had found in the House of GOD.

There was no king like him before who turned back to GOD with all his heart and soul and might, in full accord with the Teaching of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

However, GOD did not turn away from the awesome wrath that had blazed up against Judah because of all the things Manasseh did to provoke God's anger.

GOD said, "I will also banish Judah from My presence as I banished Israel; and I will reject the city of Jerusalem that I chose and the House where I said My name would abide."

The other events of Josiah's reign, and all his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

In his days, Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, marched against the king of Assyria^v<i class="footnote">Assyria I.e., the Chaldean Empire; cf. Isa. 52.4 and note.</i> to the River Euphrates; King Josiah marched toward him, but when he confronted him at Megiddo, [Pharaoh Neco] slew him.

His servants conveyed his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem, and they buried him in his tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz; they anointed him and made him king in place of his father. Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, just as his predecessors had done.

Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him in Riblah in the region of Hamath, to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem. And he imposed on the land an indemnity of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

Then Pharaoh Neco appointed Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, changing his name to Jehoiakim. He took Jehoahaz and brought him^w<i

class="footnote">brought him So 2 Chron. 36.4; Heb. here "he came."</i> to Egypt, where he died.

Jehoiakim gave Pharaoh the silver and the gold, and he made an assessment on the land to pay the money demanded by Pharaoh. He exacted from the people of the land the silver and gold to be paid Pharaoh Neco, each [holding] according to its assessment.

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Zebudah daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, just as his ancestors had done.

Chapter 24

In his days, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

GOD let loose against him the raiding bands of the Chaldeans, Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites—letting them loose against Judah to destroy it, in accordance with the word that GOD had spoken through the prophets—God's servants.

All this befell Judah at the command of GOD, who banished [them] from the divine presence because of all the sins that Manasseh had committed,

and also because of the blood of the innocent that he shed. For he filled Jerusalem with the blood of the innocent, and GOD would not forgive.

The other events of Jehoiakim's reign, and all of his actions, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Judah.

Jehoiakim rested with his ancestors, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him as king.

The king of Egypt did not venture out of his country again, for the king of Babylon had seized all the land that had belonged to the king of Egypt, from the Wadi of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

He did what was displeasing to GOD, just as his father had done.

At that time, the troops^a of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched against Jerusalem, and the city came under siege.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against the city while his troops were besieging it.

Thereupon King Jehoiachin of Judah, along with his mother, and his courtiers, commanders, and officers, surrendered to the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign.

He carried off from Jerusalem^b all the treasures of the House of GOD and the treasures of the royal palace; he stripped off all the golden decorations in the Temple of GOD—which King Solomon of Israel had made—as GOD had warned.

He exiled all of Jerusalem: all the commanders and all the warriors—ten thousand exiles—as well as all the artisans and smiths; only the poorest people in the land were left.

He deported Jehoiachin to Babylon; and the king's mother and wives and officers and the notables of the land were brought as exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon.

All the able men, to the number of seven thousand—all of them warriors, trained for battle—and a thousand artisans and smiths were brought to Babylon as exiles by the king of Babylon.

And the king of Babylon appointed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's^c*< b>Jehoiachin's* Heb. "his." uncle, king in his place, changing his name to Zedekiah.

^d*< For the rest of this book cf. Jer. 39 and 52.>* Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

He did what was displeasing to G^{OD}, just as Jehoiakim had done.

Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah were a cause of anger for G^{OD}, so that^e*< b>were a cause of anger for G^{OD}, so that* Meaning of Heb. uncertain.*>* they were cast out of the divine presence.
Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Chapter 25

And in the ninth year of his^a*< b>his* I.e., Zedekiah's. reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar moved against Jerusalem with his whole army. He besieged it; and they built towers against it all around. The city continued in a state of siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

By the ninth day [of the fourth month]^b*< b>[of the fourth month]* Cf. Jer. 52.6. the famine had become acute in the city; there was no food left for the common people.

Then [the wall of] the city was breached. All the soldiers [left the city] by night through the gate between the double walls, which is near the king's garden—the Chaldeans were all around the city; and [the king] set out for the Arabah.^c*< b>Arabah* Hoping to escape across the Jordan. But the Chaldean troops pursued the king, and they overtook him in the steppes of Jericho as his entire force left him and scattered.

They captured the king and brought him before the king of Babylon at Riblah; and they put him on trial.

They slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes; then Zedekiah's eyes were put out. He was chained in bronze fetters and he was brought to Babylon.

On the seventh day of the fifth month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

He burned the House of G^{OD}, the king's palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down the house of every notable person.^d*< b>the house of every notable person* Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

The entire Chaldean force that was with the chief of the guard tore down the walls of Jerusalem on every side.

The remnant of the people that was left in the city, the defectors who had gone over to the king of Babylon—and the remnant of the population—were taken into exile by Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards.

But some of the poorest in the land were left by the chief of the guards, to be vinedressers and field hands.

The Chaldeans broke up the bronze columns of the House of G^{OD}, the stands, and the bronze tank that was in the House of G^{OD}; and they carried the bronze away to Babylon. They also took all the pails, scrapers, snuffers, ladles, and all the other bronze vessels used in the service.

The chief of the guards took whatever was of gold and whatever was of silver: firepans and sprinkling bowls.

The two columns, the one tank, and the stands that Solomon provided for the House of GOD—all these objects contained bronze beyond weighing.

The one column was eighteen cubits high. It had a bronze capital above it; the height of the capital was three cubits, and there was a meshwork [decorated] with pomegranates about the capital, all made of bronze. And the like was true of the other column with its meshwork.

The chief of the guards also took Seraiah, the chief priest, Zephaniah, the deputy priest, and the three guardians of the threshold.

And from the city he took a eunuch who was in command of the soldiers; five of the royal privy councillors who were present in the city; the scribe of the army commander, who was in charge of mustering the people of the land; and sixty of the common people who were inside the city. Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.

The king of Babylon had them struck down and put to death at Riblah, in the region of Hamath.
Thus Judah was exiled from its land.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon put Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan in charge of the people whom he left in the land of Judah.

When the officers of the troops and their men heard that the king of Babylon had put Gedaliah in charge, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah with Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah son of the Maachite, together with their men.

Gedaliah reassured them^e
reassured them Lit. "took an oath to them."
and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans.^f
of the servants of the Chaldeans Cf. Jer. 40.9 "to serve the Chaldeans." Stay in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you."

In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, who was of royal descent, came with ten men, and they struck down Gedaliah and he died; [they also killed] the Judeans and the Chaldeans who were present with him at Mizpah.

And all the people, young and old, and the officers of the troops set out and went to Egypt because they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month, King Evil-merodach of Babylon, in the year he became king, took note of^g
took note of Lit. "raised the head of." King Jehoiachin of Judah and released him from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a throne above those of other kings who were with him in Babylon.

His prison garments were removed, and [Jehoiachin] received regular rations by his favor for the rest of his life.

A regular allotment of food was given him at the king's behest—an allotment for each day—all the days of his life.